

## WELCOME IS WARM FOR STOCK COMPANY

Columbia Players Present  
"Brewster's Millions" Be-  
fore Crowded House.

## PERFORMANCE GOOD DESPITE HANDICAP

Excellent Organization Seems  
Qualified to Reach Standard  
Set Last Season.

By J. R. HILDEBRAND.

An audience that filled every seat in the Columbia Theater and stood behind the chairs in orchestra, balcony, and gallery, welcomed the coming of a wholly new group of actors under the title of the Columbia Players. The attendance was a deserved tribute to an organization that last season furnished the Capital with probably the best stock season it ever had.

Before inspecting "Brewster's Millions" from the front it is worth while to look behind the scenes. An audience isn't much interested in a theater's troubles. It pays its money and wants its money's worth. No excuse is acceptable if the performance is marred and no amount of trouble is taken into account if the show is a success. Perhaps this is as it should be, for if you buy a bad piece of merchandise you can get it exchanged. Not so at the theater.

### Behind the Scenes.

Anyway, on this special occasion we are going behind the stage.

Four o'clock yesterday afternoon. Scenery delayed and boxes piled high in every available space. Workmen jostling about in the wings and the company attempting to rehearse.

Six o'clock. Most of the boxes opened. No time for rehearsal with scenery. Company dismissed until 7:30.

This is merely a deserved recognition of some of the handicaps under which the Columbia Players gave a comparatively smooth and highly enjoyable performance of "Brewster's Millions" last night.

If the wait between the acts was long it should be remembered that the scenery was being built—not set. If a player occasionally could not find an exit off-hand one should consider that he was playing in new surroundings.

The production of the Winchell Smith play was daring from a scenic though not from histrionic viewpoint. Its success was a higher tribute to the stage manager, Edwin H. Curtis, than to any of the company. It would be useless to try to gauge the strength of the organization from the performances of the week, since none of the women, with the possible exception of Miss Lenore Halstead, and few of the men have an acting chance. The true test will come with "The Great Divide," and even "Pearl" should afford a better criterion.

### Cast Is Large.

But the company did prove that it was not amateurish and though none can yet be charged with emotional depth they are, as a whole, gifted with a pleasing stage presence. The smoothness of the production was all the more remarkable because of the large number of persons who held the stage at various times.

Paul McAllister, leading man, was cast as the spendthrift, "Monty." One was forced to suspect that his experience in comedy work has been limited. He showed admirable restraint except when he tried to bring laughs, then his methods occasionally were too forcible. Miss Halstead had the rather passive role of Peggy. She has an attractive personality, and she seems likely to run Miss Florence Huntington a close race for honors in the subsequent productions. Miss Phyllis Sherwood was well cast as Barbara Drew, and Miss Pearl Havlin was a highly acceptable ingenue.

### Principal Male Roles.

Showing ability in the principal male roles were James H. Morrison, Robert McGroarty and Mahlor Hamilton. There were half a dozen other minor parts that might deserve mention in a smaller cast. There are a few members who may be eliminated, and the comparative importance of the parts assigned several players may have to be readjusted.

But the average strength of this year's organization is equal to that of last season, and the success or failure will lie largely with the stars.

## ABORNS SCORE HIT IN "MLLE. MODISTE"

Miss Ada Meade Proves Worthy Substitute for Fritz Scheff as "Fifi"—Organization Strong in Singing and Acting Ability.

For Washington playgoers it is natural to associate "Mlle. Modiste," that delightfully breezy and melodious opera comique, with charming Fritz Scheff. It is almost too much to expect anyone else to be Fifi after once Miss Scheff has been seen in the part. But last night at the National Theater Miss Ada Meade achieved the "impossible."

The Aborn management chose well when they selected "Mlle. Modiste" as the opening of that popular company's four weeks' engagement here. To the well-filled house which witnessed the performance it was patent that the management also has chosen well in the matter of both principals and chorus.

True, Miss Meade could not be attributed with all the winsomeness and chic and magnificent quality and range of voice which belong to Fritz Scheff, whose understudy she was for many months. However, she has studied well the capricious stage mannerisms of her former stage mate, for the Fifi she portrayed last night was the Fifi that was here some time ago in the personality of Miss Scheff. And more, Miss Meade has added to her remarkable portrayal of the original Fifi, her own attractive personality which was mainly responsible for the many encores she received after singing "Kiss Me," in the first act.

### Triumph for Bowers.

As Captain Etienne de Bouvray, Charles H. Bowers achieved a triumph. His singing compared favorably with the work of Miss Meade. His voice is rich in tone and well trained. So well does he sing that upon first hearing him that trite bromide thought, "He sings so well that he can't be much of an actor," comes into one's mind. But this is soon dispelled, for Mr. Bowers is an actor of strong future possibilities.

His singing in "The Time, the Place, and the Girl" scored a decided hit. George O'Donnell, as Henri de Bouvray, was really augmented.

### CASINO—Continuous Vaudeville.

An unusually attractive bill opened the week's engagement yesterday afternoon at the Casino Theater.

Buckley Martin and company, in a ludicrous sketch, "A Busy Manager," headed the afternoon performance and made a decided hit.

Lambert Brothers, in a number of difficult endurance tests, gave striking example of the efficiency of physical culture in building up the human body. Belle Meyer, character comedienne, amused as much by his monologue as by his musical stunts. Dunbar's trained goats, appearing here for the second time this season, scored again.

### MIDWAY—Cakewalk.

Because of a strike on the part of the professional cake walkers who had entered the free for all cake walk at the Midway last night, the event was turned into a society contest for a highly decorated cake and three prizes in gold.

Mary L. Smith and Arthur B. Lewis won the cake and ten dollars. Second place was taken by Anna Boyd and Harold Everett. Third went to Susan Beach Clarke and William De Rikhter. The contestants went into the event without any preliminary practicing, but showed themselves masters of the particular brand of rag time high stepping that has been attracting crowds to the Midway on the regular cakewalk nights. The winners will be eligible to contest in another society cake walk next Monday evening.

### LYCEUM—"The Red Moon."

The S. R. O. sign was hung out early at the Lyceum last night, where Cole and Johnson are presenting a musical comedy in three acts, entitled "The Red Moon."

Record-breaking audiences in attendance attended at both performances yesterday. Bob Cole and Rosamond Johnson, co-authors of what they style "an American musical in red and black," have evolved a musical show far above the average burlesque production, and while they have the center of the stage during the greater portion of the performance, they are ably assisted by a large company of good singers and clever dancers. "The song hits include 'Bleeding Moon,' 'The Big Red Shawl,' and 'Phoebe Brown's' Johnson's 'Piano-tune,' in which he was assisted by Cole, was one of the best features of the show.

## HONOR IS DIVIDED ON CHASE'S BILL

Ventriloquist Gives Imitation  
of Auto Hold-up on  
Conduit Road.

The offerings for the current week at Chase's are distinctly high class and honors throughout the program are evenly divided. Few of the acts have before been presented to Washington audiences. One that met with a hearty reception was that of Edward F. Reynard, a ventriloquist. The skit, entitled "The Hickville Automobile Trap," is a reminder of the many auto hold-ups on the Conduit road by an energetic constable.

Homer Lind, a well-known former barytone of grand opera fame, assisted by a young woman violinist and young man pianist, presented a musical playlet "The Opera Singer." The playlet is written along the lines of "The Music Master," and Mr. Lind's character was similar to that portrayed by Warfield. The violinist demonstrated her skill in a pleasing manner.

John E. Hazzard, in story and satire, was warmly welcomed, especially by those who remembered him as former principal comedian with Fritz Scheff. Ralph Smalley, a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, was heard in a number of high-class selections on the violin, and his offering was one of the gems of the program.

The Five Columbians appeared in a delightful singing and dancing number in which Miss Claire Miller, as the dancing doll, and la petite La-Mari Lynn, premier danseuse, were the features. The comedy of the bill was presented by Mons. Chassino, a shadowgraphist, who uses his hands and feet and achieves marvelous results in reproducing on the screen human beings and animals.

Charles Montrell, an eccentric juggler, seemed able to manipulate almost anything from a toothpick to a piano.

G. B. R.

### GAYETY—"The Bon Tons."

Frances Clare, who is playing the leading female role in Weber and Ruse's "The Bon Tons," which is the attraction at the Gayety Theater this week, is in a class all by herself. She scored a hit at the opening yesterday with her singing and dancing. The chorus is large and musical and knows how to dance.

Liddle and Perrie Berg presented a novel version of the Apache dance and the French quadrille of the penny ballet was something rare.

A little comedy runs through the bill and what there is of it, is particularly well handled by Guy Rawson, James J. Lake, and George Stevenson, the latter familiarly known as the "human bean-pole."

The performance consists of two burlesques, "A Night in the Tenderloin," and "Teddy's Trip to the Jungle," and an olio.

## WASHINGTON TO SEE DRAMA "THE NIGGER"

New Theater Company Will  
Present the Play at  
the Belasco.

"The Nigger" will be presented in Washington by the New Theater Company.

This performance was decided upon today by L. Stoddard Taylor, manager of the Belasco Theater, after a conference with S. P. Gerson, who represents the New Theater.

The action was taken despite protests against giving the play here on the ground that it would tend to stir up racial prejudices. After consultation with prominent Washington men and a careful reading of the manuscript, the local management decided that there was nothing objectionable in the drama.

Similar protests were made against the presentation of the drama at the New Theater in New York city. After the piece had been given a hearing there it was decided to present it in New York.

I was pointed out by Gotham critics that "The Nigger" was not an attack on the colored race, but was a masterly study of social and economic conditions of the freed negro.

The author of the play is Edward Sheldon, who wrote "Salvation Nell" in South.

Gallery gods blessed with utter abandon, love-lorn maidens wept bitter tears, when "East Lynne," one of the oldest of emotional plays, was presented last night at the New Academy.

The theme, older than the hills, deals with the unhappy marriage of Lady Isabel to Archibald Carlyle, her elopement with Sir Levison, following her unjust suspicion of her husband, and her subsequent abandonment in Paris, followed by her return to her former home as governess to her children and those of her husband's second wife.

"East Lynne" is a play, that has stood the test of time, and, despite some shortcomings in the company presenting it at the Academy, was just as interesting as of old.

Miss Josie M. Vickers, as Carlyle's half sister, does possibly the best work of the cast. William Lennox, as Sir Alfred Levison, the betrayer, was a "villain" through and through. Miss Grace Welby, as Lady Isabel, read her lines rather indistinctly at times. The performance, however, was greatly enjoyed by most of those present.

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## HEADS EXPEDITION TO MT. MCKINLEY

SEATTLE, Wash., May 2.—Prof. Herschel C. Parker, of Columbia University, arrived today to take charge of the expedition that will sail for Selkirk, Cook inlet, next Friday, en route to Mt. McKinley, to disprove or verify the claims of Dr. Frederick A. Cook that he scaled the highest peak.

## AUTO HITS SURREY; ONE DEAD, FOUR HURT

COLUMBUS, O., May 2.—Thomas F. Knauss, Jr., aged twenty-four, was instantly killed and four companions injured, one of them perhaps fatally, when their automobile struck a surrey in East Broad street, shortly before midnight. Four occupants of the surrey were slightly injured.

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